



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**Patent and Trademark Office**

Address: COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS  
Washington, D.C. 20231

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.
-----------------	-------------	----------------------	---------------------

EXAMINER

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

DATE MAILED:

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

# Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/812,281

Applicant(s)

KEENAN ET AL.

Examiner

Ahshik Kim

Art Unit

2876

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

## Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

## Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on \_\_\_\_.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

## Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☐ Claim(s) 1-14 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) 1-14 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

## Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on \_\_\_\_ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

## Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

## Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 6.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) \_\_\_\_.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## DETAILED ACTION

### *Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102*

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the

5 basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

10

1. Claims 1 – 6, 12 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Tracy et al. (US 6,199,753).

Tracy teaches a system and method for in-store or remote (Internet) shopping comprising a mobile terminal 70 (col. 4, lines 1 – 8), including Radio Frequency tag and scanner 75 (col. 3, lines 31 – 38), which interacts with a central host through wireless or local area network (col. 4, lines 61 – 67). The central host 14 keeps track of product information (col. 5, line 67 – col. 6, line 80 and customer information (col. 6, line 66 – col. 7, line 8) in the database. Selection of items and scanning them are recorded in real-time (col. 8, lines 16 – 25).

20

### *Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103*

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

25

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary

skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the  
5 claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various  
claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any  
evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out  
the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later  
invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c)  
10 and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

2. Claims 7 – 10, 11 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over  
Tracy et al. (US 6,199,753) in view of Bezos et al. (US 6,029,141). The teachings of Tracy have  
been discussed above.

Tracy fails to specifically teach or fairly suggest linking referring customer and referred  
15 customer by the product and rewarding the referring customer.

Bezos teaches Internet-based referral system (Figure 1) wherein bonus/commission is  
awarded to the referring customer (col. 1, line 62 – col. 2; Abstract). The data structure links a  
referring customer, a referred customer and products together (col. 1, lines 48 – 65) where the  
record can be identified, retrieved and updated by a key field (i.e., a referral source or a product).

20 In view of Bezos' teaching, it would have been obvious to an ordinary skill in the art at  
the time the invention was made to employ an old and well-known referral system to the  
teachings of Tracy in order to increase sales and expand customer base. By rewarding the  
customers with a reward system, customers are further motivated to refer a product to fellow  
shoppers or to bring new customers into the store. Furthermore, the store can use the

Art Unit: 2876

information to track purchase trends of a customer(s), or identify best/worst selling items and adjust marketing plans accordingly, and thus an obvious expedient.

Re claim 9, Tracy teaches rewarding customers with discount coupons (col. 12, lines 51+).

5

### Conclusion

I. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure: Tracy et al. (US 5,979,757); Kanter (US 5,573,314); Walker et al. (US 6,128,599); Walker et al. (US 6,049,778) disclose RF ID tag, a referral system and related methods.

10 II. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to *Ahshik Kim* whose telephone number is (703)305-5203. The examiner can normally be reached between the hours of 6:00AM to 3:00PM Monday thru Friday.


15 If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Michael G. Lee, can be reached on (703) 305-3503. The fax phone number for this Group is (703)308-7722, (703)308-7724, or (703)308-7382.

Communications via Internet e-mail regarding this application, other than those under 35 U.S.C. 132 or which otherwise require a signature, may be used by the applicant and should be addressed to [ahshik.kim@uspto.gov].

20 *All Internet e-mail communications will be made of record in the application file. PTO employees do not engage in Internet communications where there exists a possibility that sensitive information could be identified or exchanged unless the record includes a properly signed express waiver of the confidentiality requirements of 35 U.S.C. 122. This is more clearly set forth in the Interim Internet Usage Policy published in the Official Gazette of the Patent and Trademark on February 25, 1997 at 1195 OG 89.*

25 Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0956.

30

  
Ahshik Kim  
Patent Examiner  
Art Unit 2876  
October 31, 2001

35

  
KARL D. FRECH  
PRIMARY EXAMINER